

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 051817

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OGEN, AS, NZ, PP, FJ

SUBJECT: STATUS REPORT - AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, PACIFIC
ISLANDS

1. INDIAN OCEAN NEGOTIATIONS - LES GELB BRIEFED
AMBASSADOR RENOUF THIS AFTERNOON ON THE LATEST ROUND
OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS. THERE WAS LITTLE
MOVEMENT AT THE TALKS. US CRITICISM OF SOVIET
ACTIVITIES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AS BEING CONTRARY
TO THE SPIRIT AND SUBSTANCE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS PERVADED
THE ATMOSPHERE. NO DATES WERE SET FOR THE NEXT ROUND.
GELB SAID WE ARE NOW UNDERTAKING A REVIEW OF WHERE WE
ARE AND WHERE WE HOPE TO GO WITH THE NEGOTIATIONS
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2. CIVIL AVIATION - LAST WEEK'S CIVIL AVIATION
NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE AUSTRALIANS RESULTED IN BOTH
SIDES AGREEING TO DISAGREE FOR THE MOMENT. ESSENTIALLY,
THE AUSTRALIANS WANT TO MAINTAIN A HIGHLY REGULATED,
LIMITED COMPETITION SITUATION. OUR PROPOSAL WOULD
GREATLY INCREASE COMPETITION AND GIVE THE AIRLINES

CONSIDERABLE FLEXIBILITY ON FARES. THE NEXT SESSION IS SCHEDULED FOR WASHINGTON IN JUNE. EB/OA IS TALKING IN TERMS OF FINAL AGREEMENT NOT BEING REACHED IN LESS THAN A YEAR (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE).

3. PROJECT STORMFURY - THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY HAS INFORMED US THAT IT WILL SOON BE RECEIVING INSTRUCTIONS TO DISCUSS PROJECT STORMFURY WITH THE DEPARTMENT. STORMFURY IS A WEATHER MODIFICATION PROJECT AND, AS PROPOSED BY NOAA, WOULD INVOLVE SEEDING STORMS OFF AUSTRALIA'S NORTHEAST AND NORTHWEST COASTS. THE SUBJECT WAS TOUCHED ON DURING PATSY MINK'S VISIT TO AUSTRALIA IN NOVEMBER. AUSTRALIAN TECHNICAL TYPES TEND TO LOOK ON IT WITH GREAT FAVOR BUT FOREIGN AFFAIRS IS WORRIED ABOUT QUESTIONS OF LIABILITY SHOULD A SEEDED STORM GO ASTRAY (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE).

4. HEARINGS AND SWEARING IN - JOHN P. CONDON
AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE CONDON WENT BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE FEBRUARY 24 FOR HIS CONFIRMATION HEARINGS. THE SESSION WAS BRIEF AND CORDIAL. THE SFRC FAVORABLY REPORTED OUT THE NOMINEES TO THE SENATE ON FEBRUARY 28. HIS SWEARING-IN AS AMBASSADOR TO FIJI IS NOW SET FOR FRIDAY, MARCH 10, AT 10:30 AM IN THE BENJAMIN FRANKLIN ROOM. (UNCLASSIFIED). VANCE

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